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G. CAMPBELL MORGAN: THE PREACHER

A Thesis

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This certifies the acceptance of this thesis
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The writer's initial motivation for this study of George Campbell Morgan is his interest in expository preaching generally, an interest which led to an acquaintance with men who excelled in this type of preaching. Morgan was selected for special study because of the very considerable reputation he has built for himself among Bible-centered Christians of all denominations. Blackwood considers him an expositor "of unusual talent."¹ An English writer, not given to overstatement, says, "In the whole English-speaking world there is not a more consummate master of the technique, the art of preaching."² Alexander Gammie, a Scottish writer, speaks of him as "an aristocrat of the pulpit with the command of a perfect artistry."³

Aside from his preaching genius, this man might well be studied for the versatility of his accomplishments in other areas. He served as a college administrator, and as a visiting lecturer. His fame as a Bible teacher equals, if it does not exceed, his record as an expository preacher. Not the least of his attainments is his literary publications. He is the author of more than seventy books.⁴

¹Andrew W. Blackwood, The Preparation of Sermons, p. 65.

²Ernest H. Jeffs, Princes of the Modern Pulpit in England, p. 169.

³Alexander Gammie, Preachers I Have Heard, p. 199.

⁴See Appendix A.

The scope of this paper, however, is limited to a study of G. Campbell Morgan, the preacher.

Since Dr. Morgan is a recognized master in the field of Biblical exposition, the writer is especially interested in examining the Morgan sermons in the light of this fact, hoping thereby to come to a fuller understanding of what is meant by expository preaching. Books dealing with the theory of this type of preaching reveal diversity of opinion as to what constitutes expository preaching. Davis concludes, "The terms topical, textual, and expository, are used loosely and not at all uniformly in homiletical literature, and are of limited usefulness."⁵ The ambiguity of the term is demonstrated by the fact that three men of repute in the field of homiletics furnish varying definitions of the term. Walter Russell Bowie defines the expository sermon as follows:

The so-called expository sermon is the same as a sermon built upon a single brief text in that the purpose of each is to make clear the great facets of truth in the Bible's words. The difference is that an expository sermon deals with a longer passage of scripture and requires therefore more analysis and a discriminating choice as to those elements on which emphasis should fall.⁶

Blackwood agrees with this definition in essence saying that an expository sermon "comes mainly from a Biblical passage longer than two or three verses."⁷ F. B. Meyer, however, considers expository preaching to be "the consecutive treatment of some book or extended

⁵Henry G. Davis, Design For Preaching, p. 32.

⁶Walter Russell Bowie, Preaching, p. 178.

⁷Andrew W. Blackwood, Expository Preaching For Today, p. 13.

portion of Scripture. . . ."8 Caemmerer agrees with Meyer.⁹ A third definition is proposed by Sangster, "Exposition merely means 'setting forth' or 'explain'; and if a man is explaining a short text, a whole chapter, or a whole book, it is still exposition."¹⁰ Jeff D. Ray believes that expository preaching may consist of a variety of sermon types: "exegetical," "doctrinal," "historical," "biographical," and "character" exposition.¹¹

The method of procedure in this study is simple. Chapter II deals with the major influences in Morgan's life as they relate to his preaching. Chapter III is a study of the sermons themselves. A fourth chapter furnishes a summary appraisal of G. Campbell Morgan, the preacher.

⁸F. B. Meyer, Expository Preaching Plans and Methods, p. 29.

⁹Richard Rudolf Caemmerer, Preaching For the Church, p. 70.

¹⁰W. E. Sangster, The Craft of Sermon Construction, p. 68.

¹¹Jeff D. Ray, Expository Preaching, pp. 59-66.

CHAPTER II

INFLUENCES

To understand George Campbell Morgan, the man and the preacher, it is necessary to inquire into those background influences that were in large measure responsible for making the man. As William R. Cannon, in The Theology of John Wesley, expresses it,

There can be no doubt that the influence of childhood and of adolescence, the heritage of the family and of the school, are often "discernible, like the rings in the trunk of a tree," in the thought of mature thinkers.¹

Home background. The first great influence in the life of G. Campbell Morgan was that of his parents. George Morgan, the father, was a Baptist minister of Welsh descent. He was a man of strong convictions. Just previous to the birth of his son, Mr. Morgan resigned a successful pastorate in order to worship more fully according to the dictates of his own conscience. This change was owing largely to the influence of George Mueller, who advocated total dependency upon God, by faith and prayer, for all things. After resigning his pastorate in Herefordshire, Morgan senior moved with his wife and their first-born child, Lizzie, to Tetbury in Gloucestershire where a second child, George Campbell, was born December 9, 1863.² The elder Morgan would be considered Puritanical by

¹William R. Cannon, The Theology of John Wesley, p. 29.

²John Harries, Campbell Morgan, The Man and His Ministry, pp. 19, 20.

our standards today. His Bible was his complete library. In the eighty years of his life he never read a novel. He thrived on austerity. Action always followed decision. One day he took his long clay pipe from his mouth and addressing it said, "You are becoming my master instead of my servant." He then broke the pipe into pieces and threw it into the fire.³ Perhaps Harries sums up the characteristics that best describe Campbell's father in this statement:

He had the makings of an ideal Pilgrim Father, not only in moral courage in the quest for religious liberty, but in contempt for wordly enticements, coupled with a love of adventure and the simple life.⁴

But the more dominant influence in the son's life was undoubtedly that of the mother. Elizabeth Fawn Brittan was the counterpart of George Morgan in many ways. She was small and dainty in stature and fastidious in personal habits. Mrs. Morgan was the young son's first tutor and monitor. Evidently she did not share her husband's distrust of literature, for among young Morgan's earliest memories are recollections of his mother reading to him such books as Alice in Wonderland, Robinson Crusoe, and Westward Ho.⁵ Of Mrs. Morgan it has well been said: "She is a true saint, and gives the impression of a greatness which is always gentle, and a godliness which is always radiant and full of peace."⁶

³Jill Morgan, A Man of the Word, p. 23.

⁴Harries, op. cit., p. 23.

⁵Jill Morgan, op. cit., p. 24.

⁶Harries, op. cit., p. 20.

Briefly, these are the parents of George Campbell Morgan. It is not difficult to see that the son acquired the austerity of his father and the fastidious habits, gentle disposition, and breadth of interests of his mother.

The home environment was unusual. Compared with present-day standards, discipline in the Morgan home was severe. The children were not allowed companions outside the home. Playing in the street or in the park with other children was strictly forbidden. It is not surprising that such restrictions in the home would leave their mark. Morgan himself in later years acknowledged the effect of this early home training in his life:

I have always been slow to form friendships. Perhaps it is partly owing to the circumstances of my childhood that, even today, I have to fight against a natural indisposition to talk to strangers. I do not think that my friends would describe me as unsociable. The companionship of those I am privileged to know well, is very pleasant; but anybody that creates in me a feeling of restraint, I cannot bear near me. Always, I would rather address a thousand people than one. For me, an ideal existence would be a house buried in the woods, a quick transit to a crowded church, and---back again to the woods.⁷

It is by no means remarkable that in such an environment of isolation Lizzie should become the alpha and omega of his life. His sister was four years his senior, but they were joined together by the closest ties of love. Of particular interest was their play activity which included church services. Lizzie would dress all her dolls for church, prepare the pulpit and then await the preacher's coming. Punctual to the minute the young minister would enter, place

⁷Ibid., pp. 21,22.

his notes and his Bible on the pulpit and lead in "public worship." To the two participants it was a real service in a real church with a real sermon. Although the young minister was only seven years of age, he conducted the service with the same dignity and deportment as would a man of mature years.⁸ It was in this nursery that young Morgan became aware of a passion for preaching:

In that room I first preached. I had one living person in my audience, and quite a number that were not alive. I preached regularly there week after week and time after time to my sister and her dolls. It was then that there was born within me the passion to become a preacher.⁹

Lizzie's untimely death at the age of twelve caused an emotional shock to her brother which nearly culminated in his death. The boy was never strong. One night because of his inconsolable grief he ran to his sister's grave, there to collapse. As a result of his exposure he contracted pneumonia. It proved almost fatal.¹⁰

The parents not only provided a rigorous discipline for their children, but also encouraged holy habits:

I was brought up in one of those homes where the simple blunt rule concerning family altar was this. If under any circumstances it was necessary that either the breakfast or the family altar should be forfeited, it was the breakfast that had to go.¹¹

The elder Morgan continued to exercise his influence even after the son was married and in a home of his own. For instance,

⁸Harries, op. cit., pp. 22, 23.

⁹Harold Murray, Campbell Morgan, Bible Teacher, p. 134.

¹⁰Harries, op. cit., p. 25.

¹¹Murray, op. cit., p. 54.

when visiting the son on one occasion, Morgan senior carefully examined every room, and emerged with this verdict, "Yes, all very nice, but nobody will know walking through here whether you belong to God or to the devil."¹² The result of this appraisal was that henceforth a silent Christian witness was placed in every room. In this connection Campbell remarked that his father was a Puritan, and that he considered him at times to be over-strict, but in later years he had cause to be grateful for his father's rigid influence.

Before leaving the subject of Morgan's home, one more incident is considered. Perhaps it was this, more than any other one thing, that shaped the life of G. Campbell Morgan. Previous to the birth of their child, the elder Morgan and his wife knelt before God and dedicated him to the service of God. The ministry of G. Campbell Morgan was without doubt the answer to that prayer of dedication.¹³

Education. Turning now from the influences of the home, it is expedient to consider the part played by education in the life and ministry of George Campbell Morgan. For health reasons, the boy Morgan did not start school at the usual age. Instead, he was taught at home, first by his parents and later by a tutor.¹⁴ When the Morgan family moved to Chepstow, Campbell entered a private school.

¹²Ibid., p. 91.

¹³Harries, op. cit., p. 28.

¹⁴Jill Morgan, A Man of the Word, p. 24.

He was still mourning the death of his sister. He did not mix much with the other boys in recreation, but took long walks alone. Later the family moved to Cheltenham where he was sent to the Douglas Collegiate School for Young Gentlemen, commonly known as Gratton House. It was fortunate that at this time Campbell came under the influence of J. L. Butler, the principal of Gratton House. Butler encouraged the shy, withdrawn lad to take up athletic games. Participation in these exercises tended not only to build up young Morgan physically, but also helped to rechannel his interests from himself to others.¹⁵ It was while he was at Gratton that material circumstances at home made it necessary for him to begin earning a living to supplement his parents' income. Thus his formal education came to an end through no fault of his own.

Although G. Campbell Morgan has been considered by many to be a good example of an uneducated man making good in the ministry, this statement needs some qualification. First, the education which he received at Gratton House was comparable to college work in its thoroughness and exactness. Secondly, Morgan's insatiable appetite for knowledge made him an avid reader all his life. This constant reading, plus a well-disciplined mind, quick to apprehend truth, furnished Morgan with an education that far transcended the formal training of the schools. That he was later to serve on two college faculties and become president of an educational institution is indicative of the mental acquisition of the man.

¹⁵Harries, op. cit., pp. 26, 27.

Mr. Morgan, nevertheless, was always conscious of his lack of formal theological training, and considered himself "an untrained man." On one occasion while visiting Dale of Birmingham, that great preacher said to him: "You must never say you are untrained. God who has many ways of training men has trained you, and I pray that you may have great joy in His service."¹⁶ On this occasion when Dr. Dale questioned him on his acquaintance with theology books, Morgan mentioned that he had read Pope's three volume Compendium. At the age of twenty-five he was reading Wesley's Journal, and steeping himself in Kingsley.¹⁷

Another important factor in Morgan's education was his work at the Jewish Collegiate School for Boys in Birmingham. When an assistant master was needed, he applied and was accepted. As a teacher in this school for three years Morgan, of necessity, became acquainted with Hebrew law and Old Testament literature. As his biographer, Jill Morgan, remarks:

The influence of the Jewish School and its Principal can never be measured, for it not only inspired in Campbell Morgan a lifetime of research and study, but through his own Bible teaching prompted countless others to search and understand the Scriptures.¹⁸

These then are some of the more salient educational factors that moulded the man.

Spiritual influences. In speaking of the time of his

¹⁶Murray, op. cit., p. 23. Cf. Harries, op. cit., p. 50.

¹⁷Jill Morgan, A Man of the Word, p. 35.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 41, 54, 55.

conversion, Morgan does not specify any certain date; he does, however, acknowledge that there was a time in his life when he accepted the promises of Christ. Referring to the period in his childhood when he and Lizzie played church together in the nursery, he remarked, "I felt even then, that I belonged to God."¹⁹ Since he was brought up in a spiritual home where conversation doubtlessly often included discussion of conversion, it would not be unusual if his own conversion was not the climactic crisis likely to occur in one more mature. Perhaps here is the reason why he made the following statement in a letter:

Most certainly I believe in a real experience, and that a person who is "born from above" knows this without any doubt. What I do believe with equal conviction is that a great many do not know the exact moment when the gift of life was received.²⁰

His call to preach seems also to have come to him without crisis when he was but eight years old.²¹ He never doubted this call. His later activities, however, might easily be construed as meaning that this calling was to teach, for his work in this direction gave him much satisfaction. It is doubtful if he would have ventured into the work of preaching if it had not been for the intervention of Providence. He had been teaching for three years when he began to feel that he ought to devote all of his time to preaching. To be really sure that God was calling him to preach, he on one occasion

¹⁹Harries, op. cit., p. 24.

²⁰Jill Morgan (ed), This Was His Faith, p. 223.

²¹Harries, op. cit., p. 24.

thus addressed God: "If I am to go as Thy messenger, Thou wilt have to force me." As if in response to this demand, the Principal of the school came to Morgan and informed him that the school would have to close, and his services would be no longer needed. The turn of events settled for him any questions on the matter.²²

When Campbell was about nineteen, another crisis developed, probably the most serious of his life. It began just prior to his appointment as a teacher at the Jewish Collegiate School and continued throughout his first year there. The young Morgan had accepted without question or doubt the tenets of the Bible and the Church. True, most of his beliefs he held not so much from conviction as from inheritance. When he began serious preparation to teach he found a new world opening up to him, the world of Huxley, Darwin, Tyndell, Spencer and Bain. The impact of the writings of these men caused him to entertain serious doubts concerning basic convictions in his life. There came the time when, as he later said, "I was sure of nothing." The issue seemed to resolve itself about the Bible. When he came to the place where he had no assurance that the Bible was the authoritative Word of God to man, he gave up all preaching engagements, determined to face the issue to its ultimate end. One day during this crisis, Morgan decided to lay aside all the books in his library that argued either pro or con on the Bible's authority. He visited a book store in the local town and purchased a new Bible. On reaching home he retired to his room and reasoned thus with himself:

²²Murray, op. cit., p. 24.

I am no longer sure that this is what my father claims it to be--the Word of God. But of this I am sure. If it be the Word of God, and if I come to it with an unprejudiced and open mind, it will bring assurance to my soul of itself.²³

The result of all this was, as Morgan put it, "The Bible found me. I began to read and study it then, in 1883. I have been a student ever since, and I still am (1938)."²⁴ In referring later to this time he said, "This experience is what, at last, took me back into the work of preaching, and into the work of the ministry."²⁵ Small wonder that the Bible plays such a prominent part in the preaching of G. Campbell Morgan.

But he had yet another temptation to overcome. The problem of self is not foreign to the minister of the gospel, and Campbell Morgan was no exception. Possibly because of the success that attended the preaching of one so young, he for a time wrestled against pride. He was sixteen years of age at the time, with two years preaching experience behind him. While walking home one night after preaching at a cottage meeting, a companion, David Smith, pointed out to him the vanity of that kind of preaching that seeks primarily to call attention to the preacher's gifts. At first Morgan disclaimed any tendency in himself in this direction, but upon further discussion he became convinced of the truth of the charge. This realization caused much prayerful searching of soul. He summarized

²³Jill Morgan, A Man of the Word, pp. 39, 40.

²⁴Ibid., p. 40.

²⁵Harries, op. cit., pp. 33, 34. Cf. Jill Morgan, A Man of the Word, p. 40.

the incident by saying, "It was to me an experience, the effect of which has never left me."²⁶

This was not to be the last time, however, that he had to face this problem. It was after he had been ordained in the Congregational ministry and was serving in one of his first pastorates that he became aware of the fact that God was speaking to him definitely concerning the same matter. The climax came after a Sunday night service. He was alone in his study when God said to him, "What are you going to be, a preacher, or My messenger?" When Morgan that same night began to evaluate his sermons and his ministry, he made a startling discovery. As he explains it, "To my dismay I discovered that the desire to become, and to be known as a great preacher, was beginning to get the upper hand." Then followed a conflict which lasted all night. The issue was finally settled when he committed himself to God's service in these words, "Thy messenger, my Master---Thine!" But the victory was not to be complete until Morgan had destroyed a large bundle of sermons, for he now knew that they had been fashioned to include a large part of G. Campbell Morgan. He was then able to say, "Thine whole counsel I will declare, so help me God."²⁷ That he did declare the whole counsel of God, and that God did abundantly help him is evident from the record of his ministry.

Morgan served the Church in the capacity of a Congregational

²⁶Harries, op. cit., pp. 32, 33.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 45, 46.

minister. It was not, however, to the Congregational ministry that he first sought an entrance. Campbell started his ministry as a Methodist lay evangelist. When it became evident that his financial responsibilities would make it impossible for him to pursue a formal theological education, he sought to enter the Methodist ministry where such a requirement was not essential. The Methodists did, however, require that a trial sermon be preached before an examining board. The church selected for the trial of the aspiring preachers was the Lichfield Road Church in Birmingham, which had a seating capacity of one thousand. The seventy-five persons present when young Morgan preached must have seemed lost in the vastness of the sanctuary. At any rate the preacher's courage faltered. Perhaps this is not surprising when it is remembered that one of the examining preachers, sharpening his pencil as Morgan was about to go to the pulpit, addressed him in these words, "Now I am ready for you." Such a comment was not apt to instill confidence in the heart of one who was already under considerable nervous strain. The young man who had preached since he was thirteen years of age with no small success failed to pass the test. The severity of the examination can be appreciated when it is noted that of the one hundred and fifty candidates who presented themselves at this time, only forty-five were accepted.²⁸ It may be reasonably asserted that in Morgan's case failure was more likely the result of personality confusion than

²⁸Ibid., pp. 35, 36.

of homiletical ineptitude. He at one time stated, "Always I would rather address a thousand people than one."²⁹

Commenting on this rejection, Morgan later had this to say:

It was a tremendous crisis in my life--the moment when the one string upon which I tried to play the music of my ministry lay stretched under the bow of my life; the will of God first and last.³⁰

Perhaps it was this bit of background in his experience that prejudiced him against student "practice preaching" before a class:

Here I propose to take the opportunity of protesting with all the force of the strongest conviction against the ordinary sermon-class, in which a man is called upon to preach before his fellow students and members of the faculty. The whole method cuts at the root of the true idea of preaching. The man prepares for his sermon-class, from an entirely wrong motive. His sermon will be criticized, sometimes kindly, sometimes brutally, from the lower standards of consideration. Its essential character of being a message of God to men cannot be dealt with in a sermon-class. It is above and beyond criticism. Moreover, what man can preach to such an audience?³¹

Parental influence, education, and certain significant life experiences fashioned this man who was to become one of the great expository preachers of this age. His preparation for the ministry was not an easy one. It must be said that he was off to a good start by virtue of home background. But there were set-backs, such as his childhood grief, his intellectual doubt, and his rejection by the Methodist Church, that placed harsh obstacles in his pathway. That these were overcome and turned to account is owing to the grace of God and to the caliber of the man, G. Campbell Morgan.

²⁹Ibid., p. 22.

³⁰Ibid., p. 36.

³¹G. Campbell Morgan, Ministry of the Word, p. 220.

CHAPTER III

THE SERMONS

The sermons alluded to in this chapter are from the ten volume Westminster Pulpit series. There are two hundred and seventy-seven sermons in all. These were delivered by Morgan during his first pastorate at Westminster Chapel in London from 1904 to 1917. Because of the widespread demand for printed copies of his messages, Dr. Morgan made it his habit to select each week one of his sermons for publication.

Morgan had a varied ministry. In his early ministry he was known as a "Wesleyan Lay-evangelist."¹ At this time the burden of his messages was evangelistic. In his later ministry, however, the didactic became the dominant note. Not that he had lost his passion for evangelistic preaching, but rather his ability as a teacher of the Bible influenced more and more his pulpit work. Wilbur M. Smith notes Morgan's ability as a teacher-prophet, "I have always felt that of all the various gifts named in the New Testament Dr. Morgan possessed two: he was both teacher and prophet."² His emphasis in preaching is not confined merely to explaining Biblical truth. He is mightily concerned that every sermon should move the will:

Preach for a verdict. It is no use talking morality to the crowd unless we show them it is for them. Too many preachers close

¹Jeffs, op. cit., p. 172.

²Wilbur M. Smith, an introduction to The Westminster Pulpit, by G. Campbell Morgan, I, p. 9.

with a wrong Biblical note. Too many preachers close sermons that are really powerful in their discussion of moral values and spiritual things by saying: "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you." The best note is, "Thou art the man." And we have never come to the true climax of preaching until we have left that impression upon our hearers.³

Topics. A comparative study of Morgan's topics and texts reveals a close correlation between the two. Occasionally topic and text are identical as in the sermon, "We Have the Mind of Christ,"⁴ from the text I Corinthians 2:16. The general trend, however, is either to take words from the text for his topic, as in the sermon, "Tongues Like As Fire,"⁵ from Acts 2:3, or to transpose the words of the text as in the sermon, "The Nearness of God Unrecognized,"⁶ from the text in Genesis 28:16. Some sermons derive their titles from the text and the context. Using the text, "Who will shew us any good?", Psalm 4:6, Morgan develops a sermon titled, "Restlessness and Its Remedy."⁷ Here the text is the basis for "restlessness," but the "remedy" is found in the context.

As to which comes first in his sermon preparation, the topic or the text, the practice apparently varies according to the primary inspiration for the sermon. Morgan himself acknowledges that when one has to preach on a particular subject, he of necessity must find

³G. Campbell Morgan, Preaching, pp. 88, 89.

⁴G. Campbell Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, X, 213.

⁵Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, VII, 142.

⁶Ibid., p. 273.

⁷Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, IV, 48.

an appropriate text to correspond with the subject.⁸ If in his devotional reading, however, a certain text would grip his mind, the subject would grow out of his thinking on the text.⁹ Regardless as to whether the subject or the text emerged first, there was a cardinal rule which Morgan refused to violate. He would never use a "text as a pretext."

The length of Morgan's sermon topics varies from the most abbreviated title, "But,"¹⁰ to one of about a dozen words, such as, "The Shock Which the Spell of Jesus Brings to the Soul."¹¹ The majority of his titles are limited to two or three strong words such as, "Final Words,"¹² or "Dwellers in Fire."¹³ His sermon titles reveal an absence of anything suggesting sensationalism. Not that he avoided preaching on highly controversial subjects, but his titles are never built merely to engage the attention of the crowd.

Frequently the choice of words in Morgan's sermon titles would be theologically heavy for most American congregations. It is to be remembered, however, that the sermons in point were preached in England where the people are accustomed to heavier homiletical fare. Such sermon titles as "The Atonement," "Grace and Law," and "The

⁸Morgan, Preaching, p. 47.

⁹Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁰Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, IV, 162.

¹¹Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, X, 310.

¹²Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, IV, 269.

¹³Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, I, 58.

Ascension," would not fit into the vocabulary of many contemporary American congregations, however clear in statement and pertinent in content their message.

Two things are noted from a study of Morgan's subjects. First he leans heavily toward doctrinal preaching. More than twenty-five per cent of his sermons deal with some specific doctrine. Themes related to Christ are given preference. Twenty-three sermons deal with the doctrinal aspects of Jesus as the Son of God. In these, every major phase of His ministry is covered from the Advent to the Ascension. The Holy Spirit and Holiness are treated in sixteen sermons. Other subjects, dealt with to a lesser extent, are the Church, the Fatherhood of God, and Man.

The second observation the writer makes in this connection is that Morgan has an affinity for series sermons. Fifty sermons appear in a series relationship. The shortest series is made up of two sermons, the longest contains ten. The longest series is an interesting combination of two related series within an overall series of ten. The main theme is "Problems of the Religious Life."¹⁴

The majority of his series sermons deals with a doctrinal subject. A five-sermon series is concerned with the benefits of the Cross;¹⁵ a two-sermon series, with the Immanence of God;¹⁶ six

¹⁴Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, III, 143-275.

¹⁵Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, VI, 61-126.

¹⁶Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, VII, 273-299.

sermons deal with Holiness;¹⁷ five with the Kingdom of God;¹⁸ four with the Church,¹⁹ four with Christian Citizenship;²⁰ and five with the purpose of the Advent.²¹ Two sermons deal with Saint Peter,²² and five with the events of passion week and the resurrection.²³

As to form in expressing his topics Morgan is in general prosaic rather than poetic. For instance, only in the series on the Cross is alliteration used. The topics of these sermons are as follows: "Pardon by the Cross," "Purity by the Cross," "Peace by the Cross," "Power by the Cross," and "Promise at the Cross."²⁴

Although Morgan shows emphasis in certain areas such as the Person and Work of Christ, he cannot be charged with being a "hobby-ist" in choice of subjects. He himself conforms to his assertion in his book, Preaching, "A variety in texts helps to maintain variety in preaching."²⁵ For some reason the subject of prayer seems to be slighted in the Westminster Pulpit. Only one sermon deals directly

¹⁷Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, III, 266-340.

¹⁸Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, V, 247-311.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 191-246.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 140-190.

²¹Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, I, 298-351.

²²Ibid., 190-217.

²³Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, V, 74-139.

²⁴Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, VI, 61-126.

²⁵Morgan, Preaching, p. 42.

with the subject of prayer.²⁶ This does not necessarily reflect a disparaging attitude toward prayer, for this preacher's belief in prayer is expressed thus in his Ministry of the Word:

If there is one thing of which experience has made me more sure than of anything else, it is that there can be no fruitful and victorious ministry of the Word, which is not conditioned from first to last, not only in the sense of dependence upon God, but also in the active expression of it, which has been made available to us in the sacred privilege of prayer.²⁷

Nevertheless, when it is remembered that the sermons collected in the Westminster Pulpit are representative of Morgan's total sermonic output, this relative obscurity of one of the great doctrines of the Christian faith seems odd. At the time of G. Campbell Morgan's diamond jubilee celebration he had preached some twenty-three thousand three hundred and ninety times.²⁸

Texts. Campbell Morgan gives three reasons for using a text.²⁹ First, a text gives to the sermon the authority of the word of God. Secondly, a text helps to maintain definiteness in the sermon; it limits the scope of the message which in turn makes for strength. Thirdly, a text is useful in maintaining variety in preaching. He suggests four sources which help to determine the choice of a text.³⁰ The first and most common source is the preacher's regular devotional

²⁶Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, III, 49.

²⁷Morgan, Ministry of the Word, p. 250.

²⁸Murray, op. cit., p. 17.

²⁹Morgan, Preaching, p. 40

³⁰Ibid., pp. 43, 48.

reading of the Bible. Another method of choosing texts is the need for preaching on a particular subject. Such a need arises out of the problems of parishoners, such as calamity, sorrow, and moral problems. A third source is the great doctrines of the Christian Church. Morgan stresses the need for doctrinal preaching and states emphatically that such preaching should have its basis in the text. The fourth source is great themes. These themes can all be found in great texts.

Morgan also offers some principles that will guide in the choice of a text.³¹ Every text should have within it a theme, a single dominant thought. Secondly, it is often best to preach on a text that has first rebuked the preacher. Thirdly, the text should be a complete statement. This last rule, however, is not with him ironclad, for he himself at times uses just a phrase, as in the sermon, "The Spirit of Life."³² Occasionally in preaching he acknowledges that the text he is about to use is not a complete statement. For example in the sermon, "The Evangel of Grace,"³³ the text is "The gospel of the grace of God." Morgan mentions several times in the sermon that "this text is not a sentence, but a phrase." A fourth principle involves the selecting of several related scripture passages and using them as his text.

³¹Ibid., pp. 49, 52.

³²Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, I, 180.

³³Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, VII, 129.

In considering the treatment of the text,³⁴ Morgan insists that the context must be taken into consideration. The practice will prevent incorrect interpretations of a text, or the use of texts for pretexts. He warns, moreover, that care should be taken that the words in the text are authentic. If one is a student of Hebrew and Greek, he may consult the original languages. If not, the various translations and commentaries are to be consulted.

Morgan protests against the way preachers read their Scripture in the pulpit, "I don't know of anything that is worse done in the Christian Church today than the reading of the Bible by preachers."³⁵ He offers a twofold remedy for this deficiency. First, be sure to read carefully the Scripture lesson previous to going into the pulpit. This applies even to those familiar passages of Scripture. Secondly, read the Scripture with interpretation. Give the message that the writer is trying to express.

The sermons in the Westminster Pulpit reveal an amazing variety of texts. They represent forty-six books of the Bible. Twenty-three books from the Old Testament and twenty-three books from the New Testament are represented. Approximately one third, or sixty-nine of the two hundred and seventy-seven texts are from the Old Testament and two thirds, or two hundred and eight, are found in the New Testament. Morgan's favorite Old Testament book is the Psalms from which twelve texts are taken. Isaiah is next with eleven. In

³⁴Morgan, Preaching, p. 53.

³⁵Ibid., p. 46.

the New Testament, the Book of Matthew is by far the most fruitful source of texts with thirty-seven from this book. Only four texts are repeated twice. They are Matthew 5:48, Mark 8:34, Colossians 1:18, and Genesis 28:16.

In three sermons an unusual combination of contrasting texts is used. In one titled "Peace,"³⁶ three texts are selected dealing with the subject of peace. The first is Isaiah 9:6, "His name shall be called . . . Prince of Peace." The second is Matthew 10:34, "I came not to send peace . . . but a sword." The third is James 3:17, "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable."

In another sermon, "Christ and Sinners--Identified and Separate,"³⁷ two contrasting texts are used. The first, showing Christ's identification with sinners, is Luke 22:37, "He was reckoned with transgressors." The second text reveals Christ's separation from sinners, Hebrews 7:26, "separated from sinners." Another sermon which deals with Simon Peter's denial of Christ, uses contrasting texts giving Peter's great confession as found in Matthew 16:16 and his denial recorded in Mark 14:71.³⁸

Morgan also uses multiple texts to develop the Biblical background of the sermon. His sermon, "The First-Born,"³⁹ uses four texts. The first is Luke 2:7, "And she brought forth her first-born

³⁶Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, V, 9.

³⁷Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, IX, 232.

³⁸Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, I, 190.

³⁹Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, VIII, 337.

son." The second, Colossians 1:15, describes Christ, "who is . . . the first-born of all creation." The third is from the same source, verse eighteen, and states, "who is . . . the first-born from the dead." The fourth, Romans 8:29, names Christ as "the first-born among many brethren." In the sermon, "Four Mistakes about Christ,"⁴⁰ Morgan selects four statements from Scripture which reveal mistaken ideas about the person and mission of Jesus Christ. The sermon which uses the largest number of Scripture passages in the text is "Christ's Call to Courage."⁴¹ Five references are used, all from the lips of Christ and all using the words, "be of good cheer," with a different context for each reference.

It is to be observed that in this use of multiple texts there is one phrase or word repeated in each of the texts used. Morgan develops his sermon around a general topic, using the several texts as the basis for development.

The length of the texts varies. Morgan does not seem to follow any particular pattern. Some texts are quite long. For example, in a series of sermons on "Church Ideals,"⁴² he uses two Scripture references in his text. The first consists of five verses found in Matthew 18:15-20. The second is from I Corinthians 5:9-13. In all a total of nine verses is used. In comparison, however, the shortest text is found in another series of sermons entitled, "The Kingdom."⁴³

⁴⁰Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, IX, 51.

⁴¹Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, VII, 9.

⁴²Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, V, 219.

⁴³Ibid., p. 260.

The text, taken from the Sermon on the Mount, consists of two words, "Thy Kingdom." The text in each of five sermons consists of only four words, and in one sermon, of three words.

Although in his book, Preaching, Morgan strongly favors the use of texts, eleven of the two hundred and seventy-seven sermons have no text. Ten sermons without a text are in a series based on "The Problem of the Religious Life."⁴⁴ Another entitled, "Conscience,"⁴⁵ with no text, begins thus:

Tonight I have no text. If anyone is sufficiently under the power of tradition to feel that a text is necessary, then either of the twenty-nine verses in the New Testament in which the word "conscience" is found will serve, for conscience is my theme.

Two observations may be made in regard to his omitting texts. First, Morgan is "not sufficiently under the power of tradition" that he considers a text always essential. Secondly, he is thoroughly at home with the Biblical background of the sermon topics he uses.

Introductions. In a general discussion of the sermon introduction Morgan mentions three considerations: the purpose, the properties and the preparation.⁴⁶ In amplifying these three he reminds us that the central purpose of an introduction is to introduce. It should introduce the theme, and in some instances serve

⁴⁴Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, III, 143.

⁴⁵Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, X, 37.

⁴⁶Morgan, Preaching, pp. 81, 84.

to introduce the preacher to his congregation. The preacher should introduce his theme generally before dealing with it particularly. It should be kept in mind that often there will be three obstacles to overcome. First, there is the prejudice that some may entertain, either toward the preacher personally, or toward the subject upon which he is speaking. Secondly, there may be the obstacle of ignorance which must be surmounted. Generally the less one assumes the congregation knows about a subject, the more effective the introduction. The third obstacle is that of inertia, called preoccupation, which means that the introduction must capture the mind of the congregation. This is the purpose of the introduction.

The properties of an introduction, Morgan observes, should be characterized by three things.⁴⁷ He emphasizes the importance of simplicity in beginnings. He warns against using the "superlative." It is difficult to maintain the interest aroused by a spectacular introduction. The introduction should be pertinent. In it the theme is to be stated clearly. Finally, the introduction should be characterized by courtesy. Not that the preacher should be apologetic for himself or his message. Rather he is seeking for a word of commendation. As an example of this, he points out St. Paul's sermon on Mars Hill where the apostle commends the Athenians for being very "religious."

Morgan calls attention to the preparation of the introduction.⁴⁸

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 86, 87.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 80.

It is his contention that the introduction should be prepared after the main body of the discourse was prepared. He likens the introduction to a portico on a building which is built after the main structure is erected.

A study of the introductions of Campbell Morgan reveals the preacher's fondness for the contextual type of introduction. This is to be expected of one who majors in Biblical exposition. He often uses a textual exposition type of introduction. A good example of this kind is found in his sermon, "Tribulation, Kingdom, and Patience,"⁴⁹ where he says, "All this becomes far more arresting and illuminative when the phrase is considered in relation to its context." At other times Morgan by way of introduction may give a birds-eye view of the book in which the text is located. When this is done the relation of the text to the book as a whole is demonstrated, as in the sermon, "Backsliding."⁵⁰ Although there is a predominance of the Biblical type introduction, the preacher is not slavishly bound to this type.

He makes interesting topical studies in some sermon introductions. In the sermon, "The Strength of the Name,"⁵¹ the introduction describes the subject "life." He holds up this word in much the same manner that a jeweler would hold up a diamond to display its many facets. Notice the way he describes "life":

⁴⁹Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, IX, 257.

⁵⁰Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, I, 97.

⁵¹Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, IV, 281.

Life is described as a race. . . .
 Life is described as a voyage. . . .
 Life is described as a battle. . . .
 Life is considered as a great problem.

Morgan seldom uses the purely illustrative kind of introduction. An exception is his introduction to "The Young Ruler,"⁵² where he relates a personal experience. Incidentally, this preacher's use of personal illustration is sparing.

In this study, the writer discovered that Morgan uses fifteen or sixteen different types of introductions. Many of his introductions are a combination of types. A good example of this blending is seen in the sermon, "Thou Shalt Remember,"⁵³ where in the beginning he states, "Evidently, there is not only the historic setting, and the philosophic basis, but the religious purpose of this text." After touching briefly on each of these, he gives a brief definition of the word "remember."

Just as the introductions vary according to type, so they vary according to length. Most of them cannot be considered brief; a few, nevertheless, are extremely short. For example, in the sermon, "Life in the Light,"⁵⁴ Morgan requires only two sentences to form the introduction for the sermon which follows:

These Words of our Lord were spoken to critical and unbelieving men, and as their context shows, their intention was that of urging these men to yield to the light which was so soon to be withdrawn. They virtually constituted the last public utterance of our Lord.

⁵²Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, II, 138.

⁵³Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, IV, 9.

⁵⁴Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, IX, 293.

Apparently the length of the introduction is often determined by the complexity of the subject to be treated and by whether or not certain prejudices or fallacious views are held by those who are being addressed. The long introduction to the sermon, "Born Blind,"⁵⁵ is justified by an introductory remark to the sermon, "I may run counter to a good many prejudices. I certainly shall run counter to almost universal interpretation of this passage." On an average, his introductions are three or four paragraphs long.

Morgan's first sentences are for the most part somewhat arresting. One example is the opening sentence to the sermon, "Our Altar,"⁵⁶ "The majority of days in the lives of a majority of men are ordinary days."

His introductions are well organized generally. Sometimes they have definite points of progression within themselves, but more often they move from the general to the particular.

Morgan follows the older tradition of stating the proposition of a sermon. This is generally done in the last paragraph of the introduction. For example, in his sermon, "The Unstraitened Christ,"⁵⁷ he finishes the introduction with this paragraph:

This is the truth which lies like a burden on my heart today, the great truth I want to bring to others, not so much for instruction as for encouragement. All He began to do He is still doing, and we are His fellow workers; all He began to teach He is still teaching, and we are His messengers.

⁵⁵Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, VIII, 154.

⁵⁶Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, VII, 246.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 220.

The preacher insists that the proposition should be clearly defined, that it should guide the preparation, and that it should be stated in the introduction.⁵⁸ He often gives his hearers a preview of his sermon by stating its main divisions near the close of his introduction. He apparently believes that the clarity gained from this technique is more important than the suspense resulting from withholding main divisions until their appearance in the sermon body. A statement typical of this practice is seen in the sermon, "The Victorious Christian Life":⁵⁹

I want then, to speak to you of two things. First, the nature of the conflict described in this passage; and second, the conditions of victory as laid down in the theory of this writer and as borne witness to in the testimony of his own life.

Not that he always followed this rule of stating the main divisions in the introduction, but it was commonly his procedure to do so.

Conclusions. According to Morgan, the last sixty seconds of a sermon are the dynamic seconds in preaching.⁶⁰ His method of approach in his endings is an appeal to the will through the intellect and the emotions. It is his belief that the intellect is stimulated by recapitulation, personal application, and elaboration of the truth.⁶¹ His major appeal here is directed to the intellect, not to the emotions. He seldom uses an illustration in his conclusion.

⁵⁸Morgan, Preaching, p. 57.

⁵⁹Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, III, 76.

⁶⁰Morgan, Preaching, p. 89.

⁶¹Ibid.

He is free from the kind of emotional appeal that characterizes the conclusions of a Moody or Spurgeon sermon. His conclusions in the main follow four general types: the poem or hymn, the direct appeal, a recapitulation, and the so-called "practical" application. To clarify the meaning of practical application, the following definition by Blackwood is noted:

I say practical rather than personal because I use this latter term with reference to a conclusion that addresses the person or somehow stresses the person. The practical stresses the truth, not the person or persons."⁶²

Poetry is used either as the final word or in conjunction with it in forty-nine out of two hundred and seventy-seven sermons. The length of a quotation in the conclusion varies from one stanza,⁶³ to a poem of five stanzas.⁶⁴ But when poetry is used, he generally quotes several stanzas. When Morgan does seek particularly to arouse the emotions, it is likely to be through the medium of poetry.

Direct appeal is one of the most common kinds of conclusion used by Morgan. A conclusion of this sort is likely to be brief, sometimes consisting of only a sentence or two. An example of the short direct appeal is this closing paragraph in the sermon, "The All-Sufficient Solution":⁶⁵

I do not ask you to shut your mind to your intellectual difficulties, to say that these things do not matter; but

⁶²Blackwood, The Preparation of Sermons, p. 164.

⁶³Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, X, 22.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 248.

⁶⁵Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, III, 264.

to get right at the spiritual center of our life, and then to correct the circumference therefrom.

The direct appeal is often fraught with a strong sense of urgency, as in the ending of his sermon on "Sin":⁶⁶

Do not, I beseech you, give these last words away in generalities. I mean you, my brother, hidden away. Thank God, you are hidden away. No eye is resting upon you save the eye of the Master. You are hidden away in this crowd, in the grip of sin. Its power can be broken tonight and forever as you turn to the Christ of God and trust Him with all your soul and mind and body and estate. May God help all such as feel the force of sin to turn to that mighty Saviour.

The "practical" type of ending is also used generously by Morgan. Here the preacher does not address himself to the individual as "you." Rather he addresses the congregation indirectly as "we" or "I." An example in point is the ending to the sermon, "Love's Proof and Prize":⁶⁷

So by the commonplace of obedience I climb to the mountain of vision, demonstrating my love by keeping His commandments, seeing Him where I did not dream He could appear.

The final sentence of a sermon is important because of its strategic location. Because it is a sort of culmination of what has gone before, and because it is the final word, it needs to be a decisive word. It is interesting to note a thought pattern fairly common to Morgan's closing sentence, an indirect prayer, as in the sermon, "Spare Thyself!"⁶⁸ "May He help us to see and understand."

⁶⁶Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, II, 64.

⁶⁷Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, I, 218.

⁶⁸Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, II, 125.

Another example is found in "Submission and Responsibility,"⁶⁹ "God help you to find the right authority and bow under it, and so find your kingdom and reign over it."

Morgan's final sentence is sometimes simply the repetition of the text, either in part or "in toto." In the sermon, "Saints,"⁷⁰ the text is Ephesians 1:1 and 5:3, "To the saints . . . as becometh saints." The final sentence of the sermon is, "May God help us His saints, to live as becometh saints."

Morgan's conclusions are usually short. Sometimes they seem almost abrupt as in the conclusion to "The Atonement":⁷¹

If we so come, we shall know the reconciliation; and it will be reconciliation that begins with the consciousness of God and issues in love of God, and finds its crown in the works that are pleasing to God.

One thing may here be said, however, of the typical Morgan ending: it never prolongs itself till the people are weary.

Structure. It was Morgan's practice to work out first the central message of a sermon. Then after it was thought out, systematized, and stated, he would work on the introduction and the conclusion.⁷² To him the preparation of the sermon plan was of very great importance because it represents the movement of the preacher's thought. This plan should represent, at least in its first stage,

⁶⁹Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, III, 35.

⁷⁰Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, II, 282.

⁷¹Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, V, 48.

⁷²Morgan, Preaching, pp. 60, 67.

the fruit of one's own thinking on the text. In order to accomplish this it was Morgan's custom to study first the implications of the text for himself, before consulting a commentary.

Morgan believes that "Truth," Clarity," and "Passion," are the three great essentials to be kept in mind in sermon building. "Truth" is that which is revealed in the Bible, culminating in the revelation of Jesus Christ. "Clarity" is the setting forth of truth in such a way that the mind can apprehend it. "Passion" is the driving power which moves the emotions. The aim in all this is that of moving the will.⁷³

Blackwood notes, "Whenever the teaching function of the ministry looms large, structure seems important, because the man who teaches must follow a plan of his own making."⁷⁴ As expected, Morgan's sermons show definite emphasis on structure. Morgan gives two reasons for the need of definite sermon structure.⁷⁵ The first is that definite divisions help clarify the preacher's thinking on a subject; the second is that this type of sermon will be more apt to be remembered by the listener.

As stated in the study of introductions, it is his custom to state the main divisions of his sermon at the close of the introduction. He usually does this by using first, second, etc. In the body of the sermon, however, he re-states only his "first" when

⁷³Ibid., pp. 14, 15, 33, 35.

⁷⁴Blackwood, The Preparation of Sermons, p. 125.

⁷⁵Morgan, Preaching, p. 69.

beginning his first division; he does not introduce the remaining divisions by number. An example of this is in the sermon, "The Secret of Rest."⁷⁶ Before embarking into the body of the message he says:

Let me attempt this morning to lead you first in meditation on the attitude described: "Rest in the Lord," interpreted by "wait patiently for Him." In the second place, let us inquire quite honestly, Is this possible? Finally, and briefly, let us attempt some personal application.

His first point is clearly stated in the first sentence of the next paragraph which reads, "First, then, the attitude described in this passage: "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him." When finished with this division he begins his second division merely with the question, "Is this possible?" His final point is introduced by these words, "Wait patiently. How can I do it?" Although this is the general pattern of Morgan's main divisions, he does not follow this procedure slavishly.

Occasionally, a Morgan sermon has no mention of divisions either in the introduction or in the body. In the sermon, "My Friend,"⁷⁷ formal divisions are not stated. In contrast, the sermon titled, "The Spell Which Jesus Casts on Men,"⁷⁸ furnishes three main divisions in the introduction, and they are repeated in the sermon body: "First, they felt that He was a Man who lived"; his second point is introduced by this sentence, "Again, men felt that Jesus

⁷⁶Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, VI, 248.

⁷⁷Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, I, 111.

⁷⁸Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, X, 301.

knew"; the final point is preceded by a brief recapitulation, "And last, men not only felt that Jesus lived, and that He knew; they felt also that He cared, and that He cared about them."

The number of major divisions within the sermon body is generally limited to two or three. On the other hand, some sermons have four or five divisions. One sermon, "Holiness: A Present Possibility,"⁷⁹ contains as many as seven divisions.

Morgan's divisions vary considerably in length, even within a single sermon. That which the preacher considers the chief burden of the message seems to be the determining factor in division length. The sermon, "Life in the Light,"⁸⁰ has a brief introduction of two paragraphs; the second paragraph furnishes the three main divisions of the message:

Let us think first of the assumption of our Lord which we know is so certainly fulfilled; that we have the light; second, of the true attitude towards the light, ". . . believe on the light . . ."; and finally, of the issue of such belief, ". . . that ye may become sons of light."

He then begins the initial development of the first point by some references to light in the gospel of John. This leads to the heart of the message, which deals with light in the life of Christ, "What shining forth of light was there in that human being with regard to the physical, with regard to the mental, with regard to the spiritual?" The first point requires nine pages. The second consists of one page, and the third of one paragraph, which is one-half page long. Although

⁷⁹Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, III, 289.

⁸⁰Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, IX, 293.

this development may have some of the psychological implications common to the sermon development of Harry Emerson Fosdick, still one may question the practicability of a sermon division that is so slightly treated.

Morgan often concludes a main division by repeating the main idea of the division, or by repeating the portion of Scripture used as the basis in its development. In the sermon, "Saints,"⁸¹ the first main division, which is titled, "The saint is the inheritance of God, His property," concludes with these words, "I am His, not my own, but His." The conclusion of the second division is an example of repetition, using Scripture. "The saint is the workmanship of God," closes with the Scripture, "As becometh saints."

Morgan's transitions between divisions are brief. In the sermon, "Saints,"⁸² he introduces the second division with these words, "I take a step further. I am His workmanship." He begins the third division by using the same simile, "I go one step further." Occasionally his transitions are abrupt as in the sermon, "Christ and Sinners-- Identified and Separate,"⁸³ where the transition between the first and second division is accomplished by this sentence, "That leads to the next thing." Sometimes he incorporates the transition and divisional topic in the same sentence as in the sermon, "Light and Darkness,"⁸⁴

⁸¹Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, II, 282.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, IX, 232.

⁸⁴Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, III, 128.

"We begin with the fundamental conceptions of the missionary enterprise."

Morgan's sub-divisions are generally implied rather than stated as such. In the sermon, "The Limitations of Liberty,"⁸⁵ the sub-points of the first main division are not stated as such, and are difficult to find. The sub-divisions under the second main division are announced in the first paragraph of that section, and are further emphasized by numbers as he develops the second division. Occasionally sub-points are stated alliteratively. For example, in the sermon, "The Untrodden Pathway,"⁸⁶ the first main division is, "The uncertain future." The four sub-points are: "The fact of uncertainty," "The fascination of uncertainty," "The fear of the unknown," and "The force of uncertainty."

Sermon types. Morgan does not conform exclusively to any one sermon type. For example, in the sermon series entitled, "The Problems of the Religious Life," is one on, "Can a Just God Forgive Sins?"⁸⁷ It has no text. There is not even in the introduction an allusion to a text. By the standards of Blackwood its approach is topical. The sermon outline is clearly based on the topic of the message. The first point is the definition of the three terms of the topic, "just," "forgiveness," and "sins." A second point shows the process by which God

⁸⁵Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, I, 13.

⁸⁶Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, IV, 22.

⁸⁷Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, III, 157.

forgives sin. A final division deals with amplifying the concept of God's forgiveness by using New Testament ideology. The unifying factor in the sermon is the topic. The whole is concerned of course with exposition, but it is not expressed in the traditional expository framework. It is really the exposition of a topic.

Another example of that which the present writer would speak of as "topical exposition," is seen in Morgan's first sermon in a series on Holiness. In this sermon, "Holiness: Definition,"⁸⁸ the first division is concerned with the definition. The second division discusses what holiness is experimentally. Again, the division topics are derived from a subject, not from a text.

A sermon in the series mentioned, that clearly stems from a topic is captioned, "Holiness: A Present Possibility,"⁸⁹ but its entire development is in terms of Biblical reference:

I propose, therefore, to make a sevenfold statement in answer to the inquiry whether holiness is a present experience, in each case selecting one principal declaration of the New Testament in interpretation of the general thought.

In the same series, the final sermon, "Holiness: Hindrances,"⁹⁰ has two main divisions. The first deals with some of the answers commonly given to the question, "Why do we lack holiness?" Four assertions are made, and Morgan deals with each one by calling into service pertinent Scripture portions. The second division seeks to show implications contained in the text.

⁸⁸Ibid., 276.

⁸⁹Ibid., 289.

⁹⁰Ibid., 328.

Morgan occasionally preaches a sermon that is strictly topical. Such a sermon is the one titled, "My Friend."⁹¹ He states in the introduction that the basis for this sermon, "has grown out of the necessity of the hour." That necessity is the human need for companionship in the face of loneliness. The sermon, based on the role of Christ as "my Friend," is developed almost entirely from an experiential point of view.

An either-or classification according to type of many of G. Campbell Morgan's sermons would be difficult to determine, if not impossible. These sermons suggest the flexibility of Morgan's practice in Biblical preaching.

The topical exposition type, however, is not widely used by Morgan. Instead, his sermons may almost be equally divided between textual exposition and contextual exposition. When he employs textual exposition, the main divisions are taken directly from the text. "The Fruit of the Spirit,"⁹² is an example of this kind of sermonic development. The text is Galatians 5:22, 23, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law." The preacher selects for his message three words from the text, "fruit," "Spirit," and "love." The first two divisions are treated briefly in two paragraphs in all; the third division is given the major consideration. Morgan interprets the text as meaning that the fruit of the Spirit is

⁹¹Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, I, 111.

⁹²Ibid., p. 166.

love. The other descriptive terms in the text he sees as modifiers of the word "love." The burden of the message is that these "modifying" words define and show their relationship to love.

The other sermon type which is most common to Campbell Morgan is what may be referred to as contextual exposition. In this method the preacher treats a larger unit of Scripture than the single text, but he invariably uses a verse or two as the key to the unfolding of the larger Biblical unit, whether it be a paragraph, a chapter, or a Book. An example is, "The Beginning of Sin."⁹³ The message is a treatment of Genesis chapter three. The main divisions deal with three personalities, "Satan," "Man," and the "Lord God." The sermon develops first, "the Satanic method," secondly, "the Human experience," and finally, "the Divine action." Not only are the salient points in Genesis three considered, but each is supported by referring to related passages such as the Lord's temptation in the wilderness and John's definition of sin in I John three.

The sermon, "Christ in You, the Hope of Glory,"⁹⁴ is an example of paragraph exposition. In the introduction the preacher outlines the Scripture to be considered with these words:

In the paragraph in which the text occurs the Apostle uses the word "mystery" three times. In verse 24, he says, "I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church"; omitting verse 25, which as to argument is in parenthesis, we read again in verse 26, "even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and

⁹³Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, V, 338.

⁹⁴Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, I, 24.

generations." Then, in verse 27, the words of our text, "God was pleased to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Then, in the second chapter, and the second verse, "Unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, that they may know the mystery of God, even Christ."

The main divisions of the sermon are then introduced in typical Morgan style by this sentence, "First, the Church, the mystery hid from the ages; secondly, this mystery, Christ in you the hope of glory; finally, the mystery of God even Christ." Two characteristics are seen in this sermon. First, the unifying factor in this exposition is the word "mystery." Secondly, Morgan ignores the conventional divisions of chapter and verse. Elsewhere he writes, "These divisions are quite arbitrary and often misleading."⁹⁵

Materials. Morgan makes wide use of Scripture in his sermons. His usual procedure is to consider first the text and the immediate context of the text. In this he is expository-defining, showing relationships, clarifying meaning.

In the expansion of his theme he is likely to make considerable use of related Biblical passages. For example, in a sermon on John 1:13 whose subject is "Regeneration,"⁹⁶ he early in the message shows the relationship between his text and another portion in John's gospel, John three. Then he demonstrates the similarity between the "regeneration" spoken of in his text and the creation of the world as recorded in Genesis one. In the final division he considers the text

⁹⁵Jill Morgan (ed.), This Was His Faith, p. 24.

⁹⁶Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, X, 115.

in the light of the context, "He came unto His own and His own received Him not," and ends with a description of the crucifixion as the ultimate rejection.

In alluding to, or in quoting Scripture, Morgan does not usually furnish specific technical Scriptural reference. His allusion to source is likely to be in broad terms, as for instance, "The old Hebrew singer understood this to mean . . ." ⁹⁷ or "Again to quote the words of Peter with another emphasis." ⁹⁸ Any specific reference appears unobtrusively as in this instance, "The new creation is after the pattern of the story we find in the book of Genesis. In the first verse I read. . . ." ⁹⁹

Often Morgan will paraphrase a Bible passage or text in his own words, or he will merely quote therefrom a brief phrase or two. His direct Scripture quotations vary in length, as in the sermon, "The Fourfold Glory of the Church," ¹⁰⁰ where he quotes seven verses consecutively from the Song of Solomon.

It might be expected that because of his strong Biblical emphasis and his childhood training Morgan would seldom use extra-Biblical materials. A study of his sermons, however, reveals a surprisingly wide use of non-Biblical materials. The poets provide the most of this material. Shakespeare, Tennyson, Browning, and Byron,

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 82.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 306.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 122.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 201.

in this order, are used most often. Nor does Morgan neglect the hymn book. Next to the poets, hymns furnish a variety of illustration. Usually only verses from a stanza, or a complete stanza is quoted. Where poetry is used in a conclusion, however, the preacher frequently quotes at length. The conclusion to his message, "A King at the Door,"¹⁰¹ is a poem by Harriet Beecher Stowe fifty-eight lines in length. A favorite quotation comes from "Aurora Leigh,"¹⁰² by Elizabeth Barrett Browning:

Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees, takes off his shoes--
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries.

Morgan, in lesser measure, uses preaching values from history, philosophy, and contemporary events. He adapts effectively material from Carlyle, Socrates, the early Church Fathers, and from World War I. The breadth of his reading is reflected in the wide range of allusions found in his sermons.

Personal experiences are judiciously employed by Morgan for purposes of illustration. In the message, "Christ in You, The Hope of Glory,"¹⁰³ he gives his personal testimony to the presence of Christ in his own life. When he does relate a personal experience, it is likely to be one that has happened to him during the course of his ministry. Reference to himself, however, is sparing in the sermons.

¹⁰¹Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, VI, 23.

¹⁰²Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, I, 229, 305; II, 315.

¹⁰³Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, I, 24.

In twenty-six sermons chosen at random, the writer found seven personal illustrations, and each of these was less than a paragraph in length. He was not averse to acknowledging it when his story was not firsthand. For instance, in the sermon, "The Children's Playground in the City of God,"¹⁰⁴ he introduces an illustration by saying, "I will tell you a story, at second hand."

Morgan occasionally uses personal letters in the pulpit, and with much effect. One such letter occurs in the sermon, "Back-sliding":¹⁰⁵

I am going to respect this man's confidence by not reading all his letter, but I am going to read a sentence or two, and I am sure he will let me do it, because, as he says in his closing words, there may be numbers here tonight like him. He is a young man, and tells me that he came to London thinking that religion was a prop for weak people, having his own ideal, which he attempted to follow. Then he tells the story of the loss of the land, the story of the loss of influence and power, the story of actual sin. Then he tells me how, not knowing why, he wandered into this building last Sunday morning, and heard me read about the risen Jesus, and he tells me how, in the light of that vision of Christ, he was conscious of his own degradation. Then (in his letter) he says: "I crept home, broken down, broken-hearted. This is my tale. Surrounded by people yet utterly alone. There is no one to whom I can go, though my heart is aching and my mind is sick. Can you give me one word of sympathy, one word of hope, or, better still, one word of guidance? I shall be present at your service tomorrow night and all I ask is that you will say something which I can recognize and seize upon for myself. I do not want to be sought out in any way. Let me remain, as probably I am, the type of scores of unhappy men similarly situated."

The conclusion of the sermon, which follows, answers the letter by urging the young man to "seek the Lord with all your heart."

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 265.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 97.

Another use of a personal letter appears in, "Amazing Love."¹⁰⁶ Here the brief letter serves as a springboard for the sermon which follows.

Style. The length of Morgan's paragraphs varies. The introductory paragraph of the sermon, "If Christ Did Not Rise--What Then?"¹⁰⁷ is approximately three pages long. In contrast with this is the introductory paragraph of his, "The Strength of the Name,"¹⁰⁸ where the six paragraphs constituting the introduction occupy less than one page. Four of these paragraphs are composed of one sentence each, and one paragraph is a sentence of ten words. The preacher's paragraph brevity is undoubtedly in the interest of accentuating important ideas by making them stand out in this form.

His paragraph organization is generally well developed. The topic sentence is customarily stated in the first or second sentence, and quite often it is repeated at the close of the paragraph. An instance of this is in the sermon, "Manifestations of the Risen Lord,"¹⁰⁹ where the topic sentence of the paragraph is, "Jesus is seen on the seashore building a fire and preparing food for hungry fishermen." The paragraph closes with this sentence. "It is a picture of the world's Redeemer getting breakfast ready for cold, tired fishermen." Occasionally he has paragraph topics which he

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 125.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 139.

¹⁰⁸Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, IV, 281.

¹⁰⁹Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, X, 175.

fails to develop. For example, in "The Problems of the Religious Life: The Opposing Forces of the Religious Life--The Devil,"¹¹⁰ there appears this paragraph: "What was the sin? Who shall dare to say? In Milton's 'Paradise Lost' we have splendid speculation as to what the sin was; and in all probability more than speculation." Perhaps Morgan purposely did not develop the paragraph, but many a listener will be left wondering about Milton's speculation.

The length of sentences varies from the exclamatory word to the involved sentence covering a paragraph. The average sentence, however, in a Morgan sermon, as compared with contemporary sermons, is lengthy and involved. An example of a long sentence is found in the sermon "Holiness: A Present Possibility":¹¹¹

Perhaps I may put all this into another form and say, if we will be quite honest about our failure in the Christian life, about the sins we committed yesterday even though we are children of God, about those hours in which we yielded to temptation and grieved the Holy Spirit, and smirched the spotless linen of our purity, and disgraced the name of our Lord, we all know that we failed because we did not fight under the orders of the King, but leaving our proper habitation of loyalty to Him, walked in the way of temptation, and attempted in our own strength to overcome, and thus were defeated.

While it must not be assumed that a sentence of this length is typically Morgan, it does demonstrate his propensity at times to cultivate the long sentence.

Morgan's style of writing is on the whole prosaic rather than poetic. He is first of all the teacher, explaining. He is clear and

¹¹⁰Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, III, 209.

¹¹¹Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, IV, 289.

straightforward, free from ornate, embroidered language, with perhaps a propensity toward repetition. Note the words of the teacher in "The Power of the Gospel":¹¹²

The phrase is at once simple and difficult. There can be no question as to its structure. Taking the phrase as it stands, and looking at it grammatically apart from its context, it is evident that the second "faith" is resultant faith.

Once in a while the voice of the poet creeps in: "If we would speak of gentleness let us stand on the beach and see the mighty ocean with silver foam kiss the feet of the little child that plays on the shore."¹¹³

The variety of words found in a Morgan sermon reveals the breadth of his vocabulary. Occasionally he uses words foreign to the average layman's vocabulary. Words like "microcosms,"¹¹⁴ "adumbration,"¹¹⁵ and "recrudescence of evil"¹¹⁶ are apt to carry little meaning for the man in the pew. Although his choice of words like these is questionable, his language on the whole is free from provincialisms and colloquialisms. One exception is his use of the Scottish word "bairn" (child). He has a tendency to use several descriptive adjectives in sequence, as in the sentence, "This again is one of those stupendous, appalling, overwhelming claims of Christ

¹¹²Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, VIII, 284.

¹¹³Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, X, 267.

¹¹⁴Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, V, 273.

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 338.

¹¹⁶Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, X, 329.

which either demonstrate Him God in very deed and truth or prove Him to have been devoid of honesty, purity, and meekness."¹¹⁷ On the same page is another series, "By drastic, daring courageous heroism, make an end of them."

Morgan seems to show no particular affinity for figurative language, although on occasion one comes across a felicitous phrase. He expresses violence by saying, "The prince of this world plunged his venomous dart into the side of the Prince of glory. . . ."¹¹⁸ He conveys tenderness and pathos by, "It is the wailing voice of the Father who has lost His child."¹¹⁹ A classic passage describing the hypocrisy of certain people is this simile, "All the brutishness and godlessness lay like a smoldering fire under the veneered rottenness of a false culture."¹²⁰

His style shows flashes of alliteration, as for instance, "the feverish fire of impurity,"¹²¹ "What cannot be cured must be endured,"¹²² and an interesting example of alliteration is the following sentence, "One who snatched the scepter from the usurper."¹²³

¹¹⁷Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, II, 145.

¹¹⁸Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, I, 164.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 170.

¹²⁰Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, X, 168.

¹²¹Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, I, 158.

¹²²Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, II, 196.

¹²³Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, I, 309.

His treatment of a Bible episode is at times infused with a touch of homely imagination. An example of this is his sketch of the scene at Pilate's court where Peter is warming himself by the fire:

It was a cold night, and there was a fire in the court, round which the soldiers and enemies of Christ were gathered, in all probability laughingly discussing the arrest they had made, and perhaps wondering what it all meant, for in the garden they had seen the glory flame from His eyes and had fallen to the ground. They were now perhaps laughing at their own stupidity and superstition. Peter was cold, and he warmed himself at their fire. When a man gets there it is so easy for a laughing servant girl to make him swear that he never knew his Friend at all.¹²⁴

It may be said in closing that Morgan's literary style would seem a bit heavy to the present generation. It lacks generally the concreteness of diction and the pictorial imagery that are so much a part of our mid-century world.

Expository style. Wagner in his book, The Expository Method of G. Campbell Morgan, makes this statement, "Morgan's expository method is the application of the context principle of Bible study." He defines "context principle" as "the interpretation of a given passage in the light of the text which surrounds it, diminishing in importance as one proceeds from the near to the far context."¹²⁵ Here is an excellent definition of exposition. This writer, however, questions whether it ought to be ascribed to the kind of exposition found in Morgan's sermons. Rather, the preacher seems to correlate Biblical passages which bear on the particular passage under consideration,

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 196.

¹²⁵Don M. Wagner, The Expository Method of G. Campbell Morgan, p. 69.

giving equal importance regardless of proximity to the text. Morgan uses Scripture to explain Scripture. An example of this method of exposition is seen in the sermon, "The Deity of Christ."¹²⁶ The text is Colossians 2:9, "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." The first main division is an examination of the text. It is developed by referring to Paul's experience on the Damascus road as chronicled in the Acts of the Apostles. The second division comprises a definition of the terms: "Godhead," "fulness," and "dwelleth bodily." The first term is defined by comparing Paul's usage of the word in Romans. The second, by examining the purpose of the Colossian letter, and the final term is defined by considering the verb tense and the literal meaning of the word. Thus Morgan in his exposition uses the words of the text itself, the purpose of the epistle in which the text is found, and Scripture references in other New Testament Books.

His sermons frequently contain much exegetical matter. This fact is particularly evident when the preacher is defining words. It sometimes happens that the scholar's interest in exegesis overshadows the preacher's task of exposition. Morgan is meticulous in making clear original Hebrew and Greek words, as for instance in the sermon, "The Priestly Benediction,"¹²⁷ where he discusses at length the various Hebrew names for God. Again, in the sermon, "Ethical

¹²⁶Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, II, 245.

¹²⁷Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, VIII, 128.

Perfection,"¹²⁸ he embarks on definition by using this introductory word, "What then does the word mean? I am referring of course, in the first place to the actual word of the Greek New Testament."

In expounding a Scripture portion, he not infrequently sets it forth in the light of more than one translation. In the sermon, "Spare Thyself!", ¹²⁹ he at one point compares three translations: Dr. Young's, Mr. Rotherman's (The Emphasized Bible), and the King James Version. Elsewhere he often compares the translation of the King James Version with the American Standard Version of 1901, generally favoring the translation of the latter. He employs the more recent versions for two reasons: first, their contemporary language facilitates understanding of the Scripture; secondly, the later versions, making use of recent discoveries of old manuscripts, are in general more accurate.

A word needs to be said concerning the thoroughness of Morgan's preparation for exposition. Before preaching on a given text or passage, he customarily steeped himself in the Book by reading it through from forty to fifty times.

¹²⁹Morgan, Westminster Pulpit, II, 125.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Wherein lies the appeal of G. Campbell Morgan's sermons? They are Biblical. Morgan holds the Word to be the ultimate authority in matters of faith and conduct. From the time that the Bible "found" him until his death in 1945, the Word was his supreme possession. It was this fidelity to the Bible as the Word of God, together with his patient, persistent habits of study that helped make him the Prince of Expositors. His sermons are rich in Biblical analysis. The preacher's ability to "break open" the truth and apply it is perhaps exceeded by no one in our time. He deals with timeless themes. The fires of theological controversy and the "cult of the contemporaneous" are alike foreign to his message. Here is truth, always having to do with God and His ways with men, always presented with insight and with lucidity!

What definition of expository preaching is most applicable to Morgan's sermons? The limited definitions of Bowie and Blackwood would not apply to the majority of Morgan's sermons. Meyer's and Caemmerer's definition is also too confining for Morgan, for the sermons in the Westminster Pulpit, representative of Morgan's sermonic output, by no means follow a "consecutive treatment of Scripture" pattern. And what of Sangster's definition of expository preaching? "If a man is explaining a short text, a whole chapter, or a whole

book, it is still exposition."¹ Morgan's breadth of exposition is an excellent example of this definition.

The tall, gaunt figure of the man standing behind the pulpit in Westminster Chapel, preaching to thousands, is a striking sequel to the seven-year old lad standing in the Morgan nursery preaching to his sister and her dolls. Parental influences throughout childhood played a large part in the development of the preacher. But almost from the beginning, G. Campbell Morgan experienced the "inward urge" that cannot be ignored. This it was in particular that held him to the course he eventually pursued. It could not be ignored even when the stress of family circumstances forced him to accept an appointment as a day-school teacher. It could not be suppressed even when he suffered the humiliation of failure in his trial sermon before the Methodists. Resolutely he set before himself the task of preparation for the high calling. Be it ever to his honor that he became a master-preacher without benefit of formal schooling. He was always the Biblical preacher. He was essentially the teacher of the Word. Through his ministry of preaching and writing, tens of thousands have learned to respect, love, and obey the Bible as God's Word to man.

¹Sangster, op. cit., p. 68.

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APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX B

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